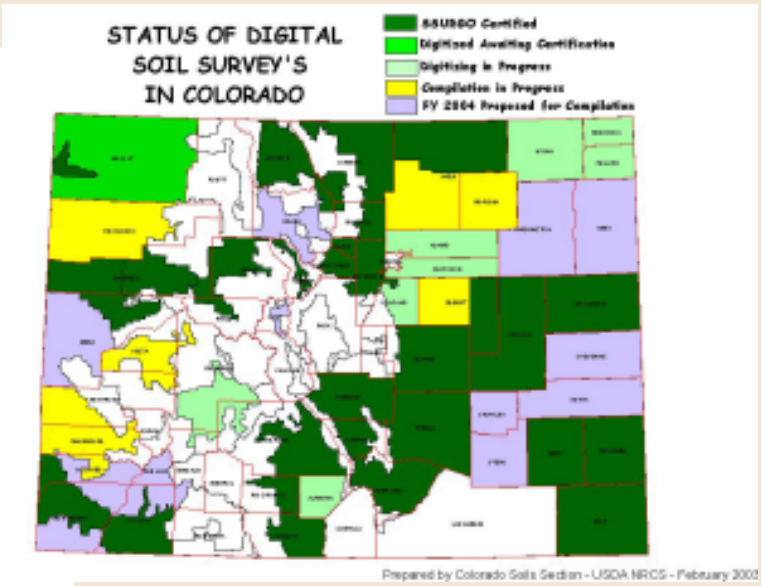
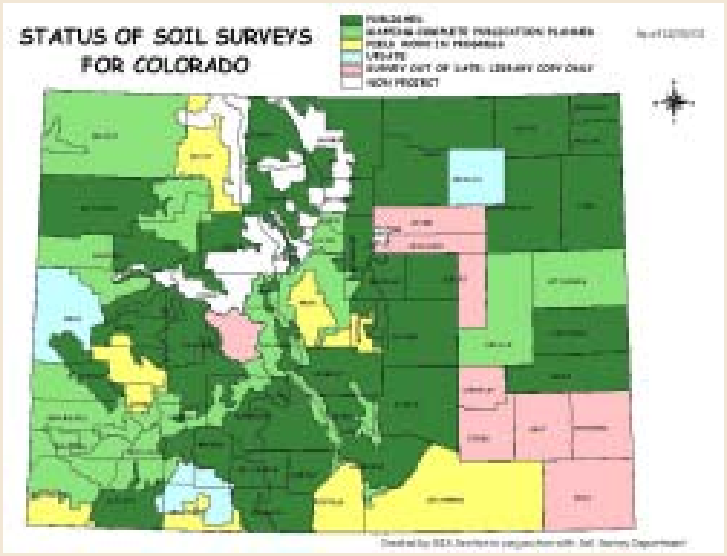
Soil Survey





Soil surveys have been an important resource tool for 100 years. At first, soil surveys were conducted to find areas in which to expand agriculture. Today, they are used to plan how to protect soil and water from erosion, sedimentation, and pollution.

Federal, state, and local governments, private individuals, and businesses use soil information for:

- Agriculture
- Engineering
- Transportation
- Urban development
- Wetlands
- Wildlife habitat
- ***…and more***

The state encompasses 62,618,200 acres. Colorado's land is approximately 63 percent private, 22 percent national forest, and 12 percent U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The rest is divided between national parks, Native American, and other Federal land. Soil surveys are available—published or in draft—for about 95 percent of the state's private land and about 96 percent of the state's Federal land.

With current staffing levels, it is estimated that soil surveys on all privately owned land will be available by 2005. Approximately 2 million acres remain to be mapped. During the past year (2002), about 425,000 acres were surveyed. Field activities are going on in these survey areas: Morgan, Mesa, Ute Mountain Indian Reservation, Costilla, Ridgway, Teller-Park, Las Animas, and Archuleta.

Soil Geographical Data

Digitizing maps and developing databases are an integral part of today's soil survey process. They are completed concurrently with other activities in both initiating and maintaining soil survey projects. The soil survey geographic database consists of:

- Spatial data such as the digital soil survey map
- Attribute data such as the survey area map unit and record data from the **National Soil Information System**
- Association source information (metadata)

photo: USDA